

P.M. Oct. 26. 1721.

*Atterbury* <sup>7a)</sup> K

I have lately seen an Extract of some Passages in Mr Old-mixon's History of England. The first of them is said to be taken from his Preface to that History, pag. 9. and runs in these words.

» I have, in more than one place of this History, mentioned the great Reason there is to suspect, that the History of the Rebellion, as it was published at Oxford, was not entirely the Work of the Lord Clarendon; who did indeed write an History of those Times, and, I doubt not, a very good one: wherein, as I have been (I believe) well informed, the Characters of the Kings, whose Reigns are written, were different from what they appear, in the Oxford History, and its Copy, Mr. Echard's. If speak this by Hear-say: but Hear-say from a Person, superior to all suspicion, and too illustrious to be named, without leave.

» I also humbly referr it to the decision of another very honorable Person, whether there is not, to his Knowledge, such an History in Manuscript, still extant; and to a Reverend Doctor now living, whether he did not see the Oxford-Copy, by which the Book was printed, alter'd, and interpolated, while it was at the Prefs.

» To which I must add, that there is now in custody of a Gentleman of distinction, both for merit and Quality, a History of the Rebellion, of the first Folio Edition, scor'd, in many places, by Mr. Edmund Smith, of Christ-Church, Oxon, Author of that excellent Tragedy, *Phadra & Hippolytus*; who himself alter'd the Manuscript History, and added what he has there marked, as he confessed with some of his last words before his Death. These alterations, written with his own hand, and to be seen by any one that knows it, may be published, on another occasion, with a farther account of this discovery. In the mean time, for the satisfaction of the Publick, I insert a Letter entire, ~~which~~ I received, since the last Paragraph was written.

To Mr. \* \* \* \* \*

SIR,

» Accidentally looking on some of the sheets of your History of England, during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuarts, at the Booksellers; I find, that you mention the History of Lord Clarendon: wherein you justly question the Genuineness of that Book. In order to put the matter out of doubt, I here send you the following account.

» Mr. Edmund Smith, a Man very well known in the learned World, came down to make me a visit at \* \* \* \* about June 1710. where he continued, till he died, about six weeks after.

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As our Conversation chiefly ran upon Learning, and History, you may easily think that *Clarendon's* was not forgotten. Upon mentioning that Book, he frankly told me, that there had been a fine History written by *Lord Clarendon*; but what was published, under his name, was only Patch-work, and might as properly be call'd, the *History of AL-SMALL-and ATTERBURY*: for, to his Knowledge, *was altered*; nay, that he himself was employ'd by them to interpolate and alter the Original.

He then asked me, whether I had the Book by me? If I had, he would convince me of the Truth of his Assertion, by the very printed Copy. I immediately brought him the Folio Edition; and the first thing he turned to, was the Character of *Mr. Hampden*, where is that expression; *He had a Head to contrive, a Heart to conceive, and a Hand to execute any Villany.* \* He then declared, it was foisted in by those Reverends,

SIR,

I have only to add this, that he not only underlined this Passage, as a Forgery; but gave, during the short time he lived with me, the same remark to some hundreds more.

I am, SIR, &c,

In a second Passage, said to be taken from pag. 227. of the History itself, *Mr. Oldmixon* is represented as expressing himself thus.

In the Character of this great and excellent Man, *Mr. Hampden*, which we could wish had escaped his (*Lord Clarendon's*) drawings, or the drawings of those clumsy Painters, into whose hands his work fell, there is something so very false and base, that such coin could only come from a College mint. (In a word, what was said of *CINNA*, might well be apply'd to *HAMPDEN*: He had a Head to contrive, and a Tongue to persuade, and a Hand to execute any Mischief. His Death therefore seemed to be a great deliverance to the Nation.)

There are not words to express the infamy of this Slander, and Imposture, nor the unparalleled wickedness of those Doctors, who foisted so horrid a reflection into that Character. The Person who did it, was *Mr. Edmund Smith* of Oxford, Author of *Phedra* & *Hippolitus*, a Tragedy; who, at his Death, confessed to the Gentleman, in whole House he died, that, among a great number of Alterations and Additions, which he himself made in the History of the Rebellion, by order of Doctor ALDRICH, Doctor ATTERBURY and Doctor SMALLRIDGE, successive Deans of Christ-

\* The words are much softer, in the History: where, instead of a *Heart to conceive*, we find, a *Tongue to persuade*; and instead of the word *Villany*, that of *Mischief*; as the Citation is, in another part of this Extract, truly made. The unknown writer of this Letter, while he is charging others with the Crime of falsifying *Lord Clarendon's* History, should have taken care to stand clear of it himself.

» Church, this very saying of CINNA, applied to Mr. Hampden, was one; and when  
» he read it to one of those Doctors, he clapped him on the back, and cry'd, with  
» an Assent, It will do. The Confession Mr. Smith made, and the Remorse  
» he expressed for being concerned in this Imposture, were his last words. »

A great part of the first of these Passages, including the Letter, is translated *verbatim* into French, and published in a Journal, entituled: *Bibliotheque raisonnée des Ouvrages des Scavans de l'Europe, pour les mois de Juillet, Août, Septembre 1730. Tome 5<sup>e</sup>. 1<sup>re</sup>. Partie. A Amsterdam, chez les Welsteins & Smith 1730.*  
Art. 5. page 154. &c.

After which, the Journalist adds the following Reflection.

Cette découverte fait peu d'honneur aux trois Théologiens qui sont nommés dans la Lettre, & qui ont pourtant tenu un grand rang dans l'Angleterre, & dans la République des Lettres. Comme Mr. Atterbury, ci-devant Evêque de Rochester, l'un des trois est encore vivant, il ne sera pas apparemment insensible à une accusation si grave; & le Public attend de lui les éclaircissements que l'intérêt seul de sa réputation semble en exiger. S'il se tait, dans cette rencontre, il n'y a point de doute que la falsification est prouvée; & quand même il ne se tairoit pas, il faut que les éclaircissements soient bien forts pour détruire ces faits.

This discovery does little honour to the three Divines named in the Letter, &c. As Mr. Atterbury, heretofore Bishop of Rochester, one of the Three, is still living, he will not probably be insensible of so grievous an Accusation; and the Publick expects from him such accounts of it, as even the interest of his own Reputation seems to require. If he is silent on this occasion, there can be no doubt, but that the falsification is proved: and, should he not be silent, what he shall say, to clear up this matter, must be very strong, to destroy the Credit of such a Testimony.

Being called upon, in this publick manner, I think myself obliged to declare, that the foregoing account, in all its parts, as far as I am any ways concerned, is entirely false and groundless. For I never saw My Lord Clarendon's History in M. S. either before, or since the Edition of it; nor ever read a line of it, but in print. It was impossible therefore that I should deal with Mr. Smith in the manner represented: with whom (as far as I can recollect) I never exchanged one word in all my life; and whom I know not that I ever saw, till after the Edition of that History. If therefore he expressed himself to this purpose, in his last mo-

ments (as I charitably hope, he did not,) he wronged me extremely, and died with a Lye in his mouth.

This vindication of the Truth, and myself, is necessary, since I happen to survive the two other worthy Persons mentioned. Were they alive, they would, I doubt not, be equally able, and ready to clear themselves from so foul an Asperion. As to one of them, *Doctor Smaldrige*, the late Bishop of *Bristol*, no suspicion of this kind can possibly rest on his memory; because he was not any ways concerned in preparing that History for the Press; but as much a stranger to the contents of it, as I myself was, till it came forth in print. I speak with the more assurance, on this head, because my great Intimacy with him, as my Contemporary, both at *Westminster*, and *Christ-Church*, gave me all the advantages requisite towards knowing the truth of what I say. With *Doctor Aldrich*, the 3<sup>d</sup>. Person accused, I was acquainted more at a distance. However, being called upon, in the manner I am, I will add also what has come to my knowledge, with regard to the share, He, and Others had, in the publication of that History.

The revising of the M. S. (written, as I have heard, not very correctly) was committed to the care of *Bishop Sprat*, and *Dean Aldrich*, by the late Earl of *Rochester*; who himself also assisted in that revisal, from the beginning to the end of the work: so that any Changes, made in it, must have had the consent of those three Persons. They were men of Probity and Truth, and incapable of conspiring in a design to impose on the Publick. I can cite nothing, that is material in this point, from the mouth of the *Earl*, with whom I rarely conversed: but the *Bishop*, and the *Dean*, to whom I severally succeeded, in the Deanerys of *Christ-Church* and *Westminster*, and in the See of *Rochester*, have occasionally more than once assured me, that no Additions whatsoever were made to the M.S. History. And even the *Earl*, in his Preface to the first Volume (for His I take it to be, thô no name is affixed to it) has publickly protested his In-

nocence in this respect, where he declares; that *They who put forth the History* ( he means Himself , and his Brother , as appears from what follows ) *durst not take upon them to make any Alterations in a Work of this kind, solemnly left with them to be published, whenevr it should be published, as it was delivered to them.*

Could He , and the two other Persons by him employd , be supposed to have made any Additions , notwithstanding such Assurances to the contrary , yet their good sense ( if not their Integrity ) would have prevented at least their retouching those Characters , which are allow'd to be the most distinguished and beautifull part of the Work , and to have something of Original in them that is not to be imitated. The after-strokes of any less able Pencil, intermix'd with those of the first Masterly Hand , would soon be discovered. And yet I am perswaded , the most discerning eye can find out no traces of such a mixture ; no , not in the Character of Mr. *Hambden* ; even in those words , at the close of it , against which Mr. *Oldmixon* so warmly declaims. They are perfectly in the style and manner of My Lord *Clarendon*: they contain nothing New in them ; but only summ up in short , what he had scattered thrô different parts of the two first Volumes. Let the Reflections , there made , be never so severe , they may naturally be supposed , in the warmth of composition , to have come from the Pen of an Historian , who had himself with zeal opposed Mr. *Hambden's* measures , and both seen , and felt the sad consequences of them : But , that the Editors of his History , no ways concerned in those Transactions , should , sixty years afterwards , coolly and deliberately make such a needless Insertion , is not to be imagined.

The Complaint , on this and other heads , should have been brought against these Editors , while it was capable of being thoroughly examined ; at present , it comes a little too late , unless it were better supported : their very Characters , to those who knew them , and the nature of the Evidence , to those who did not , will be judged a sufficient Confutation of it. For , pray , what is this Evi-

dence? It consists in an *Hear-say* from a Person, superior to all suspicion, it seems, but too illustrious to be named: in an Appeal to another very honorable Person, to a Reverend Doctor now living, and to a Gentleman of distinction both for Merit and Quality; none of whose Names are thought fitt to be owned. The only one produced in the case, is that of Mr. Smith, the Author of an excellent Tragedy; but certainly not an Author of Rank and Weight enough to blast the credit of such an excellent History. Of what use can his Testimony be to this purpose (even supposing the account of it exact,) when it is undoubtly false, as to two of the three Persons it is levelled at, *Doctor Smaldrige*, and myself; and may therefore be justly presumed alike false, as to the third, *Doctor Aldrich*? Mr. Smith appears to have been so little in the secret of the Edition of that Book, as not to have known even the Hands, through which it passed: and is not therefore to be relied upon in his accounts of any other Circumstances relating to it; especially, with regard to *Doctor Aldrich*, his Governor at *Christ-Church*; for whom his personal Aversion, and the true Reasons of it, are too well understood, to need explaining. I forbear to say any thing harsh of One, not able to answer for himself: but many now alive, who knew them both, know, how improbable, and altogether incredible it is, that Mr. Smith should have had the least share in *Doctor Aldrich's* Confidence, on so nice, or indeed on any occasion. The Gentleman, who seems to have been convinced of the truth of Mr. Smith's assertions, by his having pointed out, and underlined the Passages, *in print*, which, he said, he was employed (by the three successive Deans) to *interpolate and alter*, in M. S., must surely have been very willing to be convinced: otherwise, he would not have taken a mere assertion, for a Proof, in such a cause, and from such a Person. The story of this Death-bed Declaration slept for about twenty years: near thirty have passed, since the History of the Rebellion was published (I mean, the first part of it;) and not a few, since the Death of every person, that either

really was, or is likely to have been concerned in that publication, myself only excepted. I might probably, at the distance of *Montpelier*, where I was, when *Mr. Oldmixon* wrote, never have heard of what he lays to my Charge (Intelligence of that kind being, as he knows, not very open to me:) or, should it reach me, I might yet, in my present Circumstances, be supposed not over-solicitous to appear in the disproof of it. The delay of the Accusation therefore, if without design, was not without its advantages: and had it been deferred a little longer, till I was not only out of the way, but out of the world, it had had a still fairer chance towards being uncontradicted, and consequently credited. I have lived to hear this idle Tale, and to bear witness against it: there is no vanity in hoping, that, old as I am, I shall outlive the belief of it. An *Holland-Journal* gave me the first notice, how I had been treated, and, by that means, an opportunity of vindicating myself; which I was the rather determined not to decline, because I suffered in company with Others, men of great note and merit, through whose sides the authority of a noble and usefull part of our English History was struckat. Where I alone am aspersed and wronged, I can, I thank God, more easily practise patience, and submitt to Indignities and Injurys in silence. A Foreign writer has used me, in this case, with greater Civility, and Temper, than *Mr. Oldmixon*; whom I know not that I have ever offended. I forgive him his ill words, and his hard thoughts; & only desire him, for the future, not to indulge himself in ill-natured Relations of this kind, without better Vouchers. His attack on Me, and on the Dead, who, he thought, might be insulted with equal safety, is no proof of a generous and worthy mind; nor has he done any honour to his own History, by the fruitless pains he has taken to discredit that of My Lord *Clarendon*: which, like the Character of it's Author, will gain strength by Time; and will be in the Hands and Esteem of all men, when *Mr. Oldmixon's* unjust Censure of it will not be remember'd, or not regarded.

FRA. ROFFEN.

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